9 April 2001

ECSTASY (Methylendioxymethamphetamine – MDMA)

Street Names: "E", "X", "XTC", "Adam", "M", "hug-drug"

Other MDMA Analogue Drugs: MDA "Love", and MDEA "Eve"

Also found with other drugs called: "Power Pack", "Triple-X",

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What is it? Ecstasy is a central nervous system (CNS) stimulant that strongly activates certain centers in the brain (seratonin receptor sites). Listed as a Schedule 1 drug by the FDA with no current accepted medical use for treatment in the U.S. and it is an illegal drug in the U.S. MDMA is often referred to as a "club drug" since it is often available and sold at Rave dances and nightclubs.

What does it look like? Most frequently comes in tablet form but may also be sold as a capsule or a powder. Usually ingested orally and may be found mixed (cut) with other drugs. Ecstasy pills are unreliable in purity and may commonly contain other additives such as caffeine, ephedrine, or other amphetamine compounds. Tablets are found in a variety of shapes and colors, usually the size of a common aspirin tablet. The pills have various designs or motifs of hearts, animals or lettering imprinted on the tablet. Capsules may be referred to as "smurfs". A standard dose is usually between 80-150 mg .

How it's used: Most frequently ingested orally but can be snorted.

Effects of Ecstasy: The short-term Ecstasy effect depends on dosage. On set of a "rush or high" varies with dose between ½ to 1 ½ hours and last approximately 2-3 hours. The unreliability of MDMA content and admixing with other drugs adds an element of risk for adverse reactions. Use with other stimulants or in association with prescribed medications can have undesired consequences. Individuals with a history of high blood pressure, heart, liver, or kidney problems who use Ecstasy are at risk for adverse medical events.

Shortly after ingestion, the user has an elevation of mood, a feeling of euphoria and energy along with a desire to socialize, to touch or hug people. Other reported effects are an openness toward others, a willingness to talk, impulsiveness, friendliness, empathy, and heightened sensory perception to sound, light and touch. Visual distortion due to involuntary eye movement or "twitching", jaw clenching, teeth grinding and tongue and cheek chewing are common with Ecstasy use. Other adverse experiences commonly reported are an increase in body temperature, dehydration, salt imbalance (which may be associated with excessive water intake with concurrent salt loss from sweating), dizziness, headaches, and nausea. Individual response following Ecstasy ingestion vary. Individuals, with no prior adverse experience from repeated Ecstasy use, may experience a reaction requiring immediate medical support. Some users of Ecstasy experience a "downing of mood" or "crash" – an experience of being sad, annoyed, or feeling

threatened. This may lead to another Ecstasy "hit" in order to regain the "high." Medical publications from Europe, Canada, and the U.S. contain reports of fatal or near fatal medical outcomes associated with the ingestion of a single Ecstasy tablet. Many of the medical incidents can be related to the admixing (cutting) of various drugs in the Ecstasy tablet or reactions associated with the use of other prescription or over-the-counter medications. In other fatal or near-fatal outcomes undiagnosed underlying medical conditions were exacerbated by the use of even a single Ecstasy tablet.

Longer term effects: There is a decrease in cognitive and motor function associated with the use of Ecstasy. Many individuals commonly feel extremely drained of energy the day after Ecstasy use. A common event is a period of depression which generally occurs 2-5 days following drug use. The depressive period can actually remain for longer periods of time and may be present months after frequent and repetitive Ecstasy use. Research into the effects of Ecstasy have been conducted primarily on animals under controlled conditions, but diagnostic procedures on individuals being treated for Ecstasy abuse clearly show neurological changes within the brain. The long- term effects of Ecstasy are still being assessed. The most compelling feature in many studies is the issue of polydrug exposure that aggravates the physiological and neurologic damage associated with Ecstasy abuse.

Operational Readiness Issues: The high-tempo operational environment of the deployed forces requires individuals who are mentally alert and physically capable of performing complex decisional tasks rapidly and accurately. These are clearly environments in which an individual suffering from an Ecstasy "hangover" threatens the safety and operational mission of everyone around them. The period of anxiety and depression are clearly counter-indicated for an individual responsible with the safe operation and handling of a high caliber weapon. The decrement in motor skills, mental agility, and perception associated with Ecstasy abuse make an individual hazardous to himself and his shipmates. The mental decrements associated with Ecstasy use compromises an individuals ability to understand and carryout orders, operate complex equipment, evaluate and make decisional responsibilities in situations of changing complexity. Clearly Ecstasy abuse is counterproductive to tasks common to military operations. Ecstasy compromises the safety of those using the drug and those around them – not just while they are "high" on the drug but also for long periods of time afterwards. Specific effects from Ecstasy use of confusion, memory loss, fatigue, decreased coordination, and exhaustion can have major impacts in the reduction in operational readiness. This effect does not stop at the individual sailor but has an influence affecting the safety, morale, readiness, and mission execution in the Fleet.

Myths Surrounding Ecstasy: There are several myths that Ecstasy is not harmful, that Ecstasy rapidly leaves the body and therefore not easily detected, and that the military does not test for Ecstasy. Nothing is further from the truth. As noted above Ecstasy is a dangerous drug. While Ecstasy does clear the body rapidly, it is still detectable by procedures used in the military drug laboratories and the military drug laboratories screen all samples received as part of the random drug testing program for the presence of Designer Amphetamines, including Ecstasy. The military drug program has conducted

testing for Designer Amphetamines since 1997. Over 400 Navy and Marine Corps personnel were identified as positive for Ecstasy in FY00. The penalty for Ecstasy abuse is severe. Distribution of as little as five Ecstasy tablets can result in 5 years military imprisonment. Use of Ecstasy will result in punishment, separation from military services and loss of military benefits. For further information check the website at www.navdweb.spawar.navy.mil.